the ACTION reporter

American Council To Improve Our Neighborhoods

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# ACTION Schedules Clinics on Both Coasts

## Renewal Sessions Are Set For N. Y. September 23-24, Berkeley October 17-18

Two more Urban Renewal Clinics — an Eastern Regional gathering in New York City Sept. 23-24 and a Pacific Coast Regional session in Berkeley, Calif., Oct. 17-18 — have been announced by ACTION.

These will continue the series of such clinics ACTION is conducting to aid local leaders interested in gaining practical knowledge of the problems and potentialities in the growing nationwide effort to conserve and improve homes, neighborhoods and communities and to prevent slums and slum conditions. They will expand the pattern of earlier clinics, held in the Midwest and New England regions, providing mayors, city managers, other local officials, planners and citizen leaders an opportunity to exchange ideas and pool their experiences.

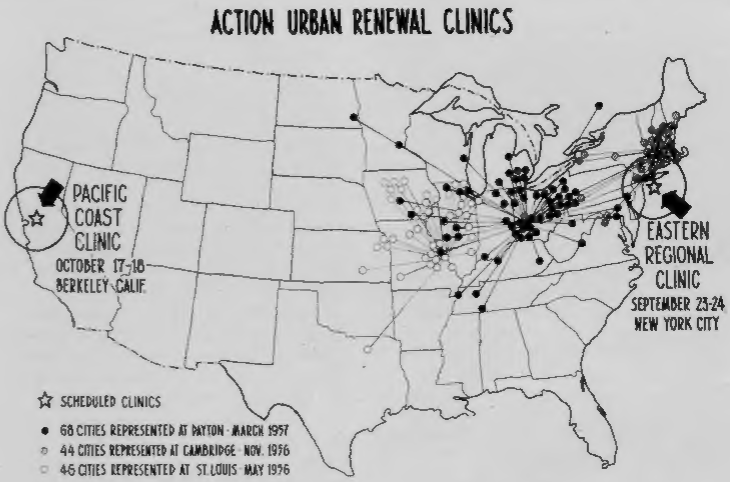
The New York Clinic has been timed to coincide with the annual meeting of ACTION's Board of Directors, marking the beginning of the fourth year of the national public service organization.

At the luncheon opening the Board meeting Sept. 23, members and invited guests will hear an address by Nelson A. Rockefeller, chairman of the board of Rockefeller Center, Inc., and chairman of President Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on Government Organization. Long active in public affairs, Mr. Rockefeller has served as Under Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, as Assistant Secretary of State, and as special assistant to the President.

**Nelson Rockefeller**

The Eastern Regional Clinic will be conducted in New York's Roosevelt hotel and will draw attendance from the following areas in addition to New York State: New England, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

*(See "Clinics," page 2)*




# Citizens' Committees Organized In Pittsburgh and Los Angeles

Two of America's major cities — Los Angeles and Pittsburgh — have recently set up Citizen's Committees to aid in urban renewal and rehabilitation.

In Los Angeles, Mayor Norris Poulson appointed a 50-member Citizen's Urban Renewal Advisory Committee, which approved that city's Community Redevelopment Agency's selection of Bunker Hill and the Sawtelle project as areas for slum clearance and rehabilitation.

According to William T. Sesnon Jr., Chairman, CRA, Los Angeles, the clearing of the Bunker Hill Project will result in the investment of $250 million by city, county, and private industry for the replacement of blighted structures with multistory commercial, civic, hotel, and residential buildings.

Recent FHFA approval of the Sawtelle renewal program makes Los Angeles the first city on the West Coast to be certified for mortgage insurance in the renewal of an area without Federal loans or grants.

In Pittsburgh, ACTION-Housing, Inc. (Allegheny Conference To Improve Our Neighborhoods — Housing, Inc.), a private non-governmental agency, has been set up by local citizens sparked by Richard K. Mellon and Ben Fischer, members of ACTION's Board of Directors.

ACTION-Housing, Inc. was created to co-ordinate all other existing Pittsburgh agencies in the urban renewal field.

In conjunction with its formation, ACTION-Housing, Inc.'s president, Dr. Charles D. Nutting, director of the Buhl Foundation, announced the appointment of Bernard E. Loshbough as executive director effective August 15.

## ORGANIZATIONS IN RENEWAL

*Below is another statement by a national organization whose activities bear on urban renewal, outlining its program, aims and resources available to local groups working for neighborhood and community improvement:*

The Urban League is a national non-profit organization dedicated to improving working and living conditions of Negro and other minority groups. Supported nationally by foundation grants, it has more than 60 area chapters which are supported locally by Community Chests and United Campaigns.

**Acts as Liaison**

According to Reginald A. Johnson, director of housing activities, "The Urban League, by dealing directly with policy-making groups, is able to serve as a liaison between local communities and their administrative governments. By functioning in close cooperation with such organizations as chambers of commerce, real estate boards, health, welfare, and industrial groups, the League attempts to create an intimate working relationship between physical planning and social welfare."

Mr. Johnson pointed out that "since most social work affects the family, the League believes this should be one of the most important spheres of its influence."

He noted that because of its local contacts with minority groups, the League is often able to assist builders, financial institutions, and governmental bureaus with market analyses and research.

**Renewal Institutes Held**

"Another tool recently used with great success was our Housing Renewal Institutes," added Mr. Johnson. "These were technical round-table considerations of the plight of the nation's non-white families, with emphasis on problem-solving. Each Urban League affiliate prepared a brief in cooperation with its local planning agency, dealing with the problems of non-white families in anticipated or current local urban renewal programs."

Because of its interest in urban renewal, the League has often been able to assist other national organizations with similar interests, and has officers associated with them. For example, Lester B. Granger, director of the Urban League, is a member of ACTION's Board of Directors.

**Publications Available**

Among the publications available at the Urban League are "A Documented Report on Housing," 25¢; "Democracy in Housing," 25¢. For these and free mimeographed copies of the proceedings of the First, Second and Third Urban Renewal Institutes, write to Reginald A. Johnson, Director of Housing Activities, National Urban League, 14 E. 48th St., New York, N. Y.

## "Clinics"

*(Continued from page 1)*

The Pacific Coast Regional Clinic is scheduled for the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley, with attendance expected from California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, Nevada and Arizona cities.

At both Clinics, subjects to be covered will include matters of interest to smaller communities as well as larger cities. ACTION again is enlisting specialists in various fields of urban renewal to act as moderators and experts at the workshops which will be held in addition to the general sessions. It is expected community delegations will be formed, as they were at earlier Clinics, to enable representatives of a given city to attend all the workshops, which again will be conducted on a continuing and repeat basis.

The Clinic in New York will begin at 4 P.M. Sept. 23, with a special session for those in communities in the initial stages of urban renewal. An informal reception for all delegates will precede a dinner meeting, at which the speaker will be James C. Downs, Jr., former Housing and Redevelopment Coordinator for the City of Chicago, a member of ACTION's Board, chairman of the Real Estate Research Corporation.

Roy W. Johnson, president of ACTION and executive vice president of General Electric Company, will preside at the dinner and introduce Mr. Downs.

A special invitational breakfast for ACTION Group Correspondents will be held Sept. 24 before the workshops begin.

At a luncheon that day, a panel presentation is scheduled on: "Urban Renewal — A Fight to Flourish." Prominent leaders in three major elements of the urban renewal movement, political, economic and planning, will participate. They are:

**Mayor Richard C. Lee of New Haven, Conn., whose city's renewal program has achieved eminence for rapid progress.**

**James W. Rouse, president of the Baltimore mortgage banking and research firm bearing his name, an ACTION Board member, and a member of President Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on Housing and chairman of its Subcommittee on Redevelopment, Rehabilitation and Conservation.**

**James C. Felt, Chairman, New York City Planning Commission, former president of James Felt and Company, Inc., real estate firm, former president of the Urban League of New York and now a national director of the League.**

After the luncheon, workshops will be continued in the early afternoon, and a summary session will close the Clinic.

## Research Dept. to Move; Meyerson Heads New Post

The office and staff of ACTION's research division will move from Philadelphia to Cambridge, Mass., as a result of the appointment of Martin Meyerson, ACTION's research vice-president, as the first Frank Backus Williams professor of city planning and urban research at Harvard University. Mr. Meyerson will serve as director of Harvard's new center for urban studies in addition to directing ACTION's research program.

**Martin Meyerson**

Major emphasis of this program will continue to be on the large-scale investigation of Impediments to the Provision of Adequate Housing, now nearing completion under a Ford Foundation grant.

First of a series of volumes in this study, which covers impact on the consumer, the producer, the investor, the government (credit policies), the community (metropolitan organization, personnel, and costs of public services and urban renewal), will be published in 1958.

To assist with completion of these studies under way under the direction of Mr. Meyerson and ad hoc committees, Herrymon Maurer, contributing editor of Fortune Magazine, has been appointed as editorial consultant to ACTION.

Holder of degrees from Harvard and Columbia universities, Mr. Meyerson is co-author of "Politics, Planning, and Public Interest," a book on the decision-making process, and has held numerous technical, administrative, and research posts, lecturing in Europe and the Near East. He is chairman of the Joint Committee on Education of the American Institute of Planners and the American Society of Planning Officials, and research editor of the Journal of the American Institute of Planners.

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Principal speaker at one of the general sessions of the Pacific Coast Clinic will be Andrew Heiskell, publisher of LIFE Magazine and Chairman of ACTION's Board. Additional program details are being worked out with Norris Nash, executive in the Henry J. Kaiser Corporation, representing the Oakland Citizens Committee for Urban Renewal.

Western members of ACTION's Board who are assisting with arrangements for the Pacific Coast Clinic are: Mrs. Norman Chandler, Fritz B. Burns and J. Howard Edgerton of Los Angeles, and Alan E. Brockbank of Salt Lake City.

# Area Group Sparks Resident—Business Backing

*This article, depicting citizens in action on a neighborhood level, is based on material submitted by an ACTION Group Correspondent.*

Chicago — Always one of the nation's leaders in urban renewal, Chicago's fight against the growth of slums received a big boost in recent years with the founding of the Roseland Area Planning Association (RAPA), now composed of 325 businessmen and 4,500 residents from that area.

RAPA was formed in 1954 to fill the need for a central coordinating planning association in a section which at that time was serviced by nine different neighborhood associations, some combining social and civic activities, others engaged only in community work.

It organized volunteer groups from the ranks of local businessmen and residents to survey the neighborhood and report violations of building codes; it conducted seasonal cleanups of alleys and lots, both industrial and residential; it campaigned for the removal of eyesores and was successful in the elimination of sub-standard housing.

As a result of RAPA's poll on sewer and flood complaints, the sewer program for this area was accelerated.

### Zoning, Legislative Committees

The Roseland Association Zoning Committee has been extremely active, and its Legislative Committee did an energetic job in the 1956 Primary, writing to each candidate for the Illinois Senate requesting pledges for the revival of a bill strengthening residential requirements.

RAPA conducted a clean-up and beautification contest for children, with $300 in prizes, in cooperation with the Citizens Committee for a Cleaner Chicago. This included cash prizes to Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Brownie troops for the best clean-up projects.

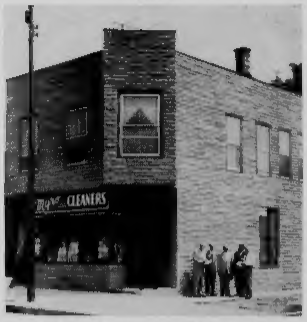
Working closely with local officials, volunteers tracked down and reported code violations and sub-standard housing.

Organizing inspection teams from the ranks of local businessmen, and employing such supplementary tools as "Operative Remodeling," published by United States Gypsum Co., and contributed to ACTION's Group Correspondents, RAPA enlisted the help of area bankers, realtors, and contractors, who assigned men to appraise old properties, research titles, and fix up antiquated buildings.

Before

**Typical of the many properties salvaged as a result of RAPA activity in Chicago is this two-story frame structure. Beside it stand RAPA and "War on Blight" officials (l. to r.) Walter H. Stuebing, membership chairman;**

After




**Edward A. Asmus, president; Henry J. Schintz, executive secretary; Phil Pawl, co-chairman, War on Blight; and Eugene Galassini, vice president, RAPA, and president, Roseland Real Estate Board.**

### War on Blight

RAPA's most notable contribution to the improvement of Chicago's housing has undoubtedly been its War on Blight campaign, headed by Henry Schintz, executive secretary of RAPA and an ACTION Group Correspondent.

Mr. Schintz reports that since its origin in May, 1956, War on Blight declared war on some 92 blighted buildings. It has met with success in 54 cases; turned over 20 more to the City Building department for prosecution; and is seeking property owners' cooperation in another 18 cases.

Property owners who refuse to cooperate are referred to the city building department and to the fire prevention division of the city. Pictures are submitted by each member civic group, and after RAPA inspection and notification to the owners, are released to the local newspapers.

### Newspapers Cooperate

Tying in with this War on Blight have been two local publications, the South End Reporter and the Calumet Index, which cooperated by publishing before and after pictures and lists of violations. Twice a year, these papers run a two-week series showing the results of RAPA activity in behalf of its community.

Recognition of RAPA's efforts has been made by citizens groups, public officials, educators, and the clergy. Mayor Richard J. Daley, in a letter to Mr. Schintz, stated, "I am sure that the constructive work you are doing is benefiting not only your own area, but our entire city."

# City by City

*(Correspondents' reports on recent activities of their groups)*

WASHINGTON . . . The nation's first "human development" project, aimed at preventing new slums by the early detection of social and health problems of relocated families, was recently approved by the District Commissioners of this city.

The Commissioners will put up $30,000 to get Housing and Home Finance Agency approval of $220,000, with private agencies and foundations contributing $80,000 in services and money.

NEW HAVEN . . .The nation's largest non-residential urban renewal project — $85 million for modernization of the city's main shopping area — was made possible recently by approval of New Haven's plan and authorization of Federal loans and grants totaling $39 million. Some $34 million will come from private capital and the remainder from the city and the state.

BUFFALO . . . "You and Your Neighborhood" was on television here. The Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Buffalo Redevelopment Foundation, local distributors, made a slide of the cover of the Scriptograph booklet being distributed by ACTION. They obtained public service time on a local TV station and used the slide to call attention to a neighborhood improvement meeting in addition to offering the booklet free.

# Reading for renewal

## National Publications

**"The Dreary Deadlock of Public Housing,"** by Catherine Bauer, and "— **How to Break It"** is a combined reprint of articles appearing in the May and June issues of ARCHITECTURAL FORUM. The first is a commentary on public housing in this country; the second is a collection of remedies suggested by leading authorities in this field.

*(Single copy free from ACTION.)*

**"ACTION Urban Renewal Clinic,"** a reprint from AMERICAN CITY, February, 1957, covers the New England Clinic and is especially timely in view of the clinics ACTION plans this year.

*(Single copy free from ACTION.)*

## CORRESPONDENTS' SWAP-SHOP

**"A Neighborhood Acts"** — an experiment in cooperative neighborhood rehabilitation, sponsored by the Morton Neighborhood Council in cooperation with the office of Philadelphia's Development Coordinator, assisted by the staff of the Germantown Settlement. This 16-page report contains surveys, before-and-after photos, methods of operation, and analysis of the role of the settlement in urban renewal.

*($1.00 per copy, 50¢ when ordered in lots of 100 or more. Write Fern Colborn, National Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, 226 W. 47th Street, New York 36, N. Y.)*

**"What Urban Renewal Can Do For Grand Rapids"** — a report by the Human Relations Commission of that city, discussing the problems arising from the displacement of housing by urban renewal and expressways. This contains pertinent information on the availability of Federal aids to urban renewal for Grand Rapids (or other cities with similar problems).

*(Free from David McNamara, Executive Director, Human Relations Commission, City Hall, Grand Rapids, Mich.)*

**"Soil Condition," "Lawns,"** and **"Annuals"** — three pamphlets prepared by a Milwaukee beautification commission to combat encroachment of deterioration in the community by fostering resident pride in the appearance of homes and gardens.

*(Free from Leo Hennen, Community Beautification and Stabilization Committee, 515 No. 30th St., Milwaukee 8, Wis.)*

**"Origin and Operation of The Property Value Maintenance Committee"** and **"Scope of Property Value Maintenance Committee's Activities"** are two reports prepared by Chicago organizations showing how a committee to maintain property values was organized and the range of its activities. On the neighborhood level, these associations indicate that the first step in effective community action is the development of a system of block delegates. The scope report includes suggestions on reporting zoning and housing violations, financial proceedings, and a rundown on the organization's objectives.

*(Single copy free from ACTION.)*

**"The Challenge of Urban Renewal,"** the annual report of the Newberry Avenue Center, Chicago, an analysis of the Center's membership according to a and sex.

*(One copy free from Barrington Dunbar, 1335 So. Newberry Ave., Chicago 8.)*

## 7th Bonus Mailing Sent Group Correspondents

ACTION now has 701 Group Correspondents, 74 more than in June, when they were sent these four publications:

**"Your Shelter Dollar"** — a 32-page booklet by Money Management Institute of Household Finance Corporation, containing data on shelter costs, choosing your neighborhood, and a home rental or purchase checklist.

**"Homes — Construction, Maintenance, and Furnishings"** — an extensive listing of materials on these subjects available from the Federal Government Printing Office, ranging from building materials to urban planning.

**"ACTION" "Home and Neighborhood Improvement Kit"** flyer — announcing a "one-package" deal on home and neighborhood information.

**"Housing Code Provisions"** — ACTION Report No. 15, a practical guide for citizen groups interested in housing codes. It contains data from more than 50 existing housing codes, definitions of key terms, and a section on administrative enforcement.

If your organization does not yet have a Group Correspondent, write ACTION for information.

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